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Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas

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LMDA NEW & NOTEWORTHY

December 2018

Vol. 4, No. 3

Year End Wrap-Up

A NOTE FROM THE LMDA PRESIDENT

Season's Greetings, Everyone!

I hope this holiday season finds you all doing well. I am wrapping up this semester's grading at SUNY New Paltz and looking forward to celebrating all of the holidays - including my birthday and wrapping it up with the new year!

I want to thank you all for the support and encouragement you provided to me, the Executive Board, and our general Board as we transitioned into leadership. I feel that we took the foundation Ken Cerniglia and the previous Executive Board laid for us and used that to grow in some pretty amazing ways in the past 6 months.

Here are some of the highlights:

- We launched partnerships with TCG and NPX -- your member dues now cover discounts to those sister organizations!
- LMDA gave away \$7,000 in grants and awards!
- We made our job listings accessible to the entire theater community.
- We added a VP of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion to further our organization's efforts

and VPs of Freelancers, and Institutional Dramaturgs (with new Facebook groups for dramaturgs who self-identify in either of those categories).

- Please join those FB group if you have not done so!

We also have some fun plans for the next year and a half including:

- A 2019 Conference in Chicago and a 2020 conference in Mexico City.
 - The submission process is now open for the 2019 conference. Here is the link to submit: <https://goo.gl/forms/FcIOKNt95VxjZ3yo1>
- Making our website and grant application processes accessible to non-English speakers.
- Improving your access to LMDA's archives, including an expansion of our documented history of the organization.
- Harnessing our members' research and information-organization skills to assemble knowledge-sharing resources.

Some of these initiatives came about because of suggestions that you brought to us so please keep them coming (email me at president@lmda.org)! We look forward to continuing to serve the community!

Best Wishes,

Martine Kei Green-Rogers, PhD.

Q+A | SARA KEATS + UMBRELLA PROJECT



What is Umbrella Project?

Umbrella Project is a new play accelerator that supports playwrights and dramaturgs with roots in Seattle, WA. We partner with other organizations to get dramaturgs staffed on production and new play projects, support writers through one-on-one dramaturgical support, partner with other organizations of new play-related networking events, like The Scratch, Latinx Theatre Conference, ACT ONE Festival, and The Dramaturgy Open Office Hours Project.

Throughout all we do, we practice what we call “radical dramaturgy.” Part of the work of Umbrella Project is to define “radical dramaturgy,” but to me it means a super-flexible, dynamic, and anti-oppressive artistic practice that mixes the kind of dramaturgy I studied in school--3” binder casebooks of research, mapping out triggers and heaps in plays--with producing, advocating, and generally being super involved in the creative process of how a play or production comes to be. There are a lot of people around the world who do this kind of work as their regular dramaturgical practice, but it's my hope that by bringing a new term into the Seattle theatre community, we can expand what other theatre artists perceive as the role of the dramaturg. No shade to the 3” binder of research--I love that, too--but I want people to know that you can't replace a dramaturg with Google. There's a type of critical thinking and creativity that is unique to this role, and if we can expand our idea of what deliverables a dramaturg is responsible for (a glossary, a program note), we can really deepen the theatrical experiences we create. The directors and writers I most love to work with get that-- it takes a lot more trust and work to get there, but I really believe the art is better for it.

How did the Umbrella Project begin? How has it grown/changed since its inception?

I co-founded Umbrella Project with my colleagues Erin Bednarz, Gavin Reub, and Norah Elges in the summer of 2015. Norah had returned from that year's LMDA conference energized by the idea of dramaturgs as producers on new work, and approached the three of us about starting an organization that centered around that idea. We thought if we empowered dramaturgs and literary managers--who are so often the biggest advocates for new plays--by putting *them in*



a leadership role, we could make Seattle an even better place to develop and produce new work. At first, we were really interested in how the structure and culture of tech startups could inform a new way of running a theatre company, in fact, Gavin and I did a Hot Topics presentation about applying startup methodology to new play development at the 2016 LMDA conference in Portland.

Since then, we've changed up our tactics quite a bit, though our commitment to fostering new work in Seattle by activating community partnerships and empowering dramaturgs and playwrights is still the same. We're less interested in a startup model and more about working directly with playwrights, dramaturgs, and organizations. We've got a bunch of really fruitful partnerships, like staffing dramaturgs on the whole MainStage season at Seattle Public Theatre and working with writers one-on-one in our Script Consultancy program.

Like so many organizations, we took a good hard look at ourselves after the 2016 election and decided we needed to regroup on our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Though we still have plenty of work to do, we've refocused our work on supporting and amplifying underrepresented voices and decolonizing our dramaturgical practice.

We've also grown a ton: our staff has basically tripled in size, we're running more programs than seemed possible a year ago, and Umbrella Project artists are everywhere in Seattle and beyond. I'm really proud of where we're at and super excited to see where we go next.

How can LMDA members get involved or at least follow along?

I have found so much support and mentorship in this Umbrella Project endeavor from LMDA members. I clock the growth and evolution of Umbrella Project from conference to conference. So first off, thanks to everyone in LMDA who is already involved in Umbrella Project.

We're really excited to grow our national network. If you run a theatre company or literary department and would welcome some awesome PNW plays, please say hello!

We'd also love to know every dramaturg in the Northwest region. If you're in B.C. or Washington or Oregon, say hello, especially if you're in Seattle. Got mentees heading this way for an internship? Send them our way.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also say how much a donation from our LMDA family would mean to us--it's annual giving season, folks, and we've got some dramaturgs to pay.

You can find out more about Umbrella Project [HERE](#).

Interview by Amanda Dawson

REGIONAL EVENTS UPDATE: December 2018

BY JACQUELINE GOLDFINGER

Dramaturgs like to drink and collaborate—this is what I have learned during my first tenure as VP of Regional Activity...and I love it.

We are about half way through our theater season, and already we've held 19 regional events, including co-sponsoring the Fools' Fury Factory Festival (San Francisco), Davenport Conference (New York City), and Company One's Boot Camp (Boston). These events have included over 150 participants around the country.

Please send your holiday best wishes and new year's love to our incredible regional leaders: Marie Barlizo

(Canada), Jessica Kahkoska & Heidi Schmidt (Butte/Big Sky/Rockies), Jen Plants (Greater Midwest), Nakissa Etemad (Bay-area), Maren Robinson (Chicago-area), Rachel Abrams (NYC-area), Jessie Baxter (Boston-area), Amy Brooks (Central Appalachia), Paul Adolphsen (Florida), Julia Bumke (Philadelphia-area), Hannah Hessel Ratner (Mid-Atlantic), Talya Kingston (Northeast), Roxanne Ray (Northwest), Scott Horstein (Southern California), Jane Barnette (Plains), Amber Bradshaw (Southeast), Kate Langsdorf (Southwest/Special Events), and Haley Nelson (Third Coast). They've done a truly impressive job thus far and are hard at work planning activities for the spring. If you'd like to connect with your region, or have an idea for an activity, you can do so through our website: <https://lmda.org/map>



Special shout outs: to Kate who has been pulling double duty for LMDA on the Regional and Membership committees, to Jessica and Heidi for reigniting the dramaturgical passion in their geographic region, and to Maren for running a wildly successful partnership with LMDA and the Dramatists Guild in Chicago!

We also ran our first online happy hour discussions that were open to all members. This provided the membership to engage with one another based on mutual interests (rather than shared geography). The discussions went beautifully and I'd like to send out a personal Thank You to all of our special guests: Jess Applebaum, Alexandra Espinoza, Julia Bumke, Maybe Burke, Martine K. Green-Rogers, Madeline Oldham, Finn Lefevre, and Heidi Schmidt. We will continue this online discussion series in the future!

Our goal is to have the roster of spring regional events to you by early February 2019. Please keep an eye on LMDA social media as well as the newsletter for further information.

Happy Holidays!

(Photo from the Fools Fury New Work Festival and dramaturgs seeing *The Color Purple* together and networking event.)

#LMDA19 Call for Proposals

LMDA: Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas
2019 CALL FOR PROPOSALS:
CROSSING BORDERS, Pt. 2: Action in a Time of Division
June 20-22, 2019 • Chicago, IL



Portal now open! SUBMIT PROPOSALS [HERE!](#)

OVERVIEW

Chicago, IL is a city of contradictions: one of the most segregated places in the U.S., yet a proud sanctuary city; a site of wealth and privilege juxtaposed with poverty and disinvestment; and a symbol of the greatest community cohesion and some of the worst systemic injustices in the nation.

Crossing Borders, Pt. 2 welcomes panels, roundtables, workshops, and other dynamic conversations about what constitutes “action” for positive social change in a time of crisis; and which illumine how we build pathways to collaboration across imagined and real borders – including, but not limited to, the ones found in our host communities in Chicago. We invite presenters to explore how artists and academics instigate positive action in a time of division, asking:

How might dramaturgs...

- facilitate necessary conversations within our institutions and communities?
- promote inclusion on our stages and throughout our practice?
- shape programming to speak to the pressing issues of the moment?
- cultivate new audiences and foster new artists?
- spur political engagement and facilitate direct political actions?
- understand how borders as physical and social constructs impact the way theaters solicit, produce, and commodify art and artists?
- Interrogate how and when dramaturgs choose to reinforce or disrupt borders?

VENUE & ACCOMODATIONS

Crossing Borders, Pt. 2 will be held on Chicago's Columbia College campus. Lodging will be available at the Grant Park Best Western (across from Columbia), as well as through Columbia College. We also encourage attendees to explore Chicago's plentiful [Airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com) options.

LMDA's VALUES

LMDA promotes the belief that theatre is a vital art form that has the power to nourish, educate, and transform individuals and their communities and that dramaturgy is central to the process of theatre-making. To this end, we invite proposals for papers, presentations, panels, and other containers for discussion on the conference theme or other topics related to dramaturgical and literary management practice.

LMDA encourages and prioritize proposals from diverse voices and artists. The conference venue is a fully accessible space – please contact the committee with any questions or access needs you would like to identify.

Our member-service organization is committed to the following objectives:

- to affirm, support, and broaden the roles that literary managers and dramaturgs play in the theatre;
- to promote the exchange of information about the function, practice, and value of literary management and dramaturgy;
- to encourage cooperation among the practitioners and theoreticians of dramaturgy;
- to expand the boundaries of the field and enrich our conversation about the making of live performance by welcoming colleagues from disciplines such as dance, opera, and performance art; and
- to put emphasis on international exchange, as well as a commitment to diversity of form, culture, and content.

The deadline for proposals is FRIDAY, FEB 1, 2019. Members of the LMDA Conference Planning

Committee will review and respond to all applicants, and we thank you for your ideas.

Please fill out the form below and email conference@lmda.org with any questions.

NOTE: This Google Form is optimized for desktop.

(Picture: Mural in the Wicker Park neighborhood of Chicago)

Upcoming Regional Events

-Plains: January, Networking and discussion event around *Indecent* at KC Rep

-Metro Philly: January/February, Bake-Off and networking with local new work organizations

-Plains: April 1, Online happy hour and networking

-Third Coast: April, Networking and discussion event around *Wolf at the Door* at Kitchen Dog Theatre

-Florida: April, Networking and discussion event around *The Cake* at Asolo Theatre

-Metro NYC: May, Speed Networking Event

-Rockies/Butte/Big Sky: Spring, Online Panel on the Playwright/Dramaturg relationship

-Mid-Atlantic: Spring, A panel conversation on Civic Dramaturgy



Want to know if regional meetups are happening near you! Click [HERE](#) to find your region!

Regional questions? Reach out to the VP of Regional Activity Jacqueline Goldfinger (regional@lmda.org).



Join us in Chicago for #LMDA19

Put it on your calendar now!

June 20-22, 2019.

Keep an eye on lmda.org/conference for information for next year's conference!

CALL FOR TRANSLATORS

As we look ahead to #LMDA20 (pssst...in Mexico City), we could use help with a few things - 1) LMDA members who can translate the call for the 2019 and 2020 conference into Spanish/Portuguese, 2) Names/contact information for translators in Mexico City 3)

Leads on potential artists to connect with in Mexico and the surrounding area.

Please send any leads to Martine (president@lmda.org).

Interested in contributing to the next newsletter? Have content ideas?

E-mail communications@lmda.org.

Want to keep up with the conversation about the latest in dramaturgical activity?

- Follow us on Social Media (@LMDAmericas) by clicking on the logos below!



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